

Food Notes | The Newsletter of Food for People

SUMMER ISSUE 2019



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Notes From the Director

Celebrating Advocacy Successes & Local Solutions

By Anne Holcomb

I'd like to thank one of our outgoing Board members, Edie Jessup, for inspiring this column. We've spent so much time over the years advocating for changes in policies and programs to improve food security that we rarely take a moment to step back and reflect on our successes. The good news is that there are quite a few advocacy victories and creative local solutions to celebrate, and I'd like to take this opportunity to highlight some of them for you.

SSI and CalFresh: In June of this year, seniors and people with disabilities who receive SSI benefits will finally become eligible to apply for CalFresh benefits (see Heidi McHugh's article on page 10). California is currently the only state that prohibits SSI recipients, whose maximum monthly benefit ranges from \$700 to \$930/month, from accessing CalFresh. Advocates have been working on this issue for almost two decades and it was finally resolved! This will impact approximately 6,000 individuals in Humboldt County who will soon be able to use their CalFresh benefits to shop for food and save the rest of their meager benefits to cover housing, utilities, and health care costs. Approximately 35-45% of the people who use Food for People's Choice Pantry receive SSI and this will make a big difference in their ability to access healthy foods.

Market Match: People can also use their CalFresh benefits at North Coast Growers' Association (NCGA) Farmers' Markets and increase their purchasing power through Market Match. Shoppers can swipe their card at the Market Manager's booth for any amount of wooden dollar tokens and receive a free bonus of up to \$10 in Market Match tokens, once per market day to spend on fresh fruits and vegetables and plant starts that produce food. Market Match is funded through USDA and CDFA grant programs and helped increase the use of CalFresh at our local Farmers' Markets by more than 350% in the first few years after implementation. It's a big win for CalFresh recipients and for local farmers who have seen a steady increase in sales as a result.

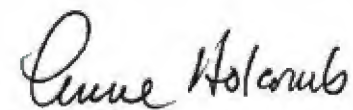
Locally Delicious: The Heirloom Tomatoes, the ladies who formed Locally Delicious many years ago, created a unique strategy for providing equitable access to locally grown produce through its Food for People Farmer Fund. 2019 marks the 10th year of the Farmer Fund, which makes it possible for us to contract with local farmers at the beginning of the growing season to grow crops specifically for Food for People's programs. We provide the funds in the spring when farmers' resources are typically at their lowest, and we receive the fresh, local, and mostly organic fruits and vegetables throughout the growing season. It's a winning strategy for both the people we serve and the farmers we contract with and represents a great investment in our local food system.

an annual allocation to food banks to pay for the costs of years of advocacy to secure an \$8 million allocation. The famous bipartisan support from both the Governor and Governor Brown vetoed the allocation. We're fighting the funding and we've been working to ensure that it becomes a standard line item in the budget. Many other much smaller states have had similar allocations of \$10-\$20 million dollars for years; it just takes California to catch up. We appreciate CalFresh for allowing only California produced foods and for the allocation to purchase local fruits and vegetables, beef, and other nutritious items.

Infrastructure Funding for Food Banks: There is a downturn in the economy, a reduction in funding for basic safety net programs, and we need to make sure people still have the food to eat to stay healthy. Most food banks receive some grants, but they are also very dependent on grants and donations to keep the doors open and operations functioning. If a major piece of equipment suddenly breaks down and needs to be replaced, it can be tough to come up with the money to cover those costs. After many years of working on this, we're thrilled when the CA Legislature provides additional infrastructure funds for food banks in our state. One of the things being used to install reefer (refrigerated) trucks, purchase reach forks for a forklift, and improve the efficient use of space in our offsite warehouse. A 10 year old freezer that is so old we can no longer use it. The original request was for \$25 million in infrastructure funds. Our lists are long, so we will be returning to the legislature for additional funds.

As you can see, the driving theme in all of our work is persistence. It can sometimes be frustrating to change, and we have to seize every opportunity to change communities and our policymakers. But it is our job to lift up the voices of the people who want a healthier, healthier communities for all. There are many things to address, but thanks to the hard work of our staff and people like you who support our efforts, we are making progress. We hope you will join us!

With gratitude
and best wishes to all,



Anne Holcomb,
Executive Director

Please donate th



Summer Lunch

Food for Kids

By **Carrie Smith**, Child Nutrition Programs Coordinator

After a long wet winter, I think we all can agree that we are looking forward to summertime and a little bit of sunshine! With the school year coming to an end, it also means we, here at Food for People, are busy getting ready for our Children's Summer Lunch Program. We anticipate another great summer, marking our 22nd year as a sponsor of this federally funded food assistance program. This program aligns perfectly with Food for People's mission, offering free, nutritious lunches in order to improve the health and wellbeing of more than 300 children every weekday, all summer long.

Even though statistics have shown that unemployment is down, the reality is that a lot of families are still struggling to make ends meet. Summer is an especially challenging time. Thousands of children eat meals at school each day throughout Humboldt County. When school is out, parents and caregivers are left to fill that void. For many, there simply isn't money to pay for those extra meals. Some face extremely difficult decisions like either paying for a utility bill or buying groceries. Many parents

We will have nearly 20 sites from Hoopa down to Rio Dell, where young children can come to receive a free lunch every weekday during the summer break. Boys and Girls Clubs, Day Camps, and Recreation Programs, and kid-friendly activities help to make the summer fun. This year, we distributed thousands of lunches. We anticipate similar numbers this year. As we move fast-paced weeks ahead, we are grateful for our supporters, especially Humboldt Transit Authority, who help deliver to communities outside of Eureka. We are thankful that there are other organizations in the Eureka area to accommodate the community. Eureka City Schools will have sites open throughout the summer break as well as the Jefferson Project located in Eureka.

This year, Food for People's Children's Summer Lunch Program will run from June 17th to August 23rd. Please look for our fliers in your community and visit our website for a list of sites in early June. If you have



Congressman Jared Huffman at R
Food for People and the organ

Locally Delicious Farmer Fund

10 Year Anniversary

By **Allison Kenney**, Local Food Resources Coordinator

Humboldt County is home to a uniquely dynamic and relatively vast organic farming community and local food scene. We are lucky to have a dedicated group of advocates who believe that healthy, nutritious food should be accessible to all and who are actively engaged in bridging the gap between food insecurity and our region's abundant food resources. Locally Delicious is a nonprofit that was spearheaded by an ambitious group of Humboldt women who are passionate about improving our local food system to be stronger and more sustainable - they are known as the "Heirloom Tomatoes."

The organization was born from its humble beginnings as the Locavores Potluck group. Discussion of the local food system was common at these potlucks, and the six women soon joined forces to create 'Locally Delicious: Recipes and Resources for Eating on the North Coast,' which highlights regional abundance and offers recipes to utilize this area's many agricultural delights. The Tomatoes have since sold thousands of copies of their cookbook. A few years later they developed their second book: 'Lunch Box Envy: An Adventure in Eating for Kids and Families', which is a cookbook aimed at encouraging families to adopt nutritious eating habits and foster an early understanding of diet-related health in young children through an education-focused cookbook.

Writing the cookbooks was fun and had success, but the Tomatoes decided that they wanted to refocus their mission to make a bigger impact - they decided to use the "Three E's" as a framework for the organization's future objectives. The three E's stand for Economy, Equity, and Environment, and the Tomatoes believe that these three elements are the integral pillars of a

for People Farmer Fund." The fund is a partnership between Locally Delicious, Food for People, and the community. The farmers receive an economic boost through a contract with Food for People each season when input costs are high and prices are low. Food for People is then able to provide fresh produce to clients. Produce contracted through the fund is almost exclusively in our Senior & Homeless populations, the largest, most vulnerable population in our community. Come residents have access to locally-produced nutritious produce they may otherwise be unable to access.

The fund is well known throughout the community, and encourages and supports local, sustainable agriculture by offering a monetary incentive. Food for People offers a variety of contracts from long-time, established farmers to upcoming farmers who are just beginning in the Humboldt agricultural scene, and based on their level of production. The only criteria for the Locally Delicious Fund is that the farmers are operating under organic practices. This helps local agriculture is helping to enrich our region's water, and healthy soil for generations to come.

For the first Farmer Fund, the Locally Delicious Fund out partners in the community to match the fund with a total of \$3,000. St. Joseph Health was the first organization to donate to the fund. Other organizations have donated to the fund, including the McLean Foundation, Coast Central Credit Union, Capital Bank, among many generous individuals. In total, over \$100,000.00 has been raised for the fund, and nearly 115,000 pounds of produce has been distributed.

Matt's Meals

A Salad for the Summer

By **Matt Drummond**, Nutrition Education Coordinator

The Dish Three Sisters Salad

Summer is here! Birds are chirping, flowers are blooming, bees are buzzing and fresh produce is pouring through our doors. This time of year, crisp greens, various roots, multi-colored squash, and plump berries are plentiful. This dramatic bump in abundance adds color, flavor, and variety to the recipes and samples available for the children, seniors, and families we serve through our nutrition education program.

The summer months are an exciting time here at Food for People. We see firsthand the dramatic impact that a community's food system can have. We receive **thousands of pounds of produce** from local farmers, gardeners, florists, arborists and other green-thumbed givers. As Food for People's Nutrition Education Coordinator, I am lucky enough to create recipes, using what is provided by our amazing community.

One of my favorite summer recipes is the three sisters salad. The three sisters are: corn, beans, and squash. Indigenous tribes planted all three in the same plot, creating the agricultural revolution known as companion planting. The sisters benefit from one another and produce nutrient dense, storable food. I love this dish; it is delicious and has roots in Native American agricultural history.



Matt happily enjoying

The Ingredients

- 2 Tbsp. olive oil
- 1 can of black or white beans (15-ounce)
- 1 can or 3 ears of corn (15-ounce)
- 1 small zucchini, chopped
- 1 tablespoon fresh cilantro, chopped
- 1 tablespoon lime juice (about ½ a lime)
- 1 jalapeño, seeds removed and finely chopped (optional)
- 2 garlic cloves, crushed or minced
- 1 tsp. cumin, paprika, and chili powder
- Salt and pepper to taste

Optional ingredients

Red pepper flakes, green onions, cayenne

The Recipe

Step One: Drain and rinse the beans in a colander and place in a medium bowl.

Step Two: Add diced cilantro and zucchini to the bowl.

Step Three: Make a dressing with olive oil, lemon juice, garlic, salt and pepper.

Step Four: Add dressing to the bowl and mix.

Step Five: Enjoy! Please follow us on social media.

The 27th Annual Letter Carriers

“Stamp Out Hunger” Food Drive



This was Fred's 27th year helping for the food drive.

By **Allison Kenny**, Local Food Resources Coordinator

Each year on the second Saturday in May, the Letter Carriers hosts a nationwide food drive, “Stamp Out Hunger,” in partnership with local pantries. Saturday, May 11th marked the 27th annual Letter Carriers Food Drive, the largest single-day food drive in the nation. Letter Carriers in Humboldt County are asked to participate locally by placing nonperishable food items by their mailboxes. Letter Carriers Union partners closely with Food for People and local pantries to coordinate the pick-up and delivery of food donations throughout the county. Carriers work with local communities and get to know the people on the streets. They witness first-hand the struggle of low income families and the hard work of our local Letter Carriers Union, a community, this year over 30,000 pounds of food were collected throughout Humboldt County during the food drive.

The food received through this annual food drive will help Food for People replenish the shelves of our local food pantries. They have already distributed the donations gathered throughout the food collected during the Letter Carriers Food Drive. In our efforts to provide for low-income residents during the summer months, when school children are without the meals during the school year and struggling families are not able to use the blue, pre-printed donation bags in our efforts. We worked with letter carriers to have them deliver food throughout the county during the week leading up to the drive, making it easier for folks to donate.



THANK YOU!

Food for People would not be able to coordinate such a large-scale effort successfully without all of the people and organizations who contribute to our efforts year after year. We would like to acknowledge and thank Coast Central Credit Union for sponsoring our pre-printed bags and t-shirts for the event. We also want to thank Ming Tree Realtors, Ray's Food Place and Wildberries Marketplace for their sponsorship of the pre-printed donation bags. We would also like to thank Murphy's Cutten, Murphy's Sunnybrae, John's Cigars, and Country Club Market for providing their facilities for use as remote drop sites for letter carriers; and Eureka Natural Foods, Rainbow Storage, Pier-son's, RMI Outdoors, Mad River Radio, 94.1 The Lounge, and KHUM for their help in promoting the event.

This effort by the National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC), with the help of rural carriers, other postal employees and numerous other volunteers, has resulted in the delivery of well over one million pounds of food in Humboldt since its inception more than twenty years ago. In Humboldt County, the food collected is used to supplement food boxes for low-income families and seniors. Food for People and its network of 17 pantries serve more than 12,000 Humboldt County children, seniors, and other individuals each month. All food collected stays in the community in which it was donated to help local individuals and families in need.



Over 30,000 pounds of food was sorted by almost 100

**Thank you to our sponsors
for making this possible**



Belonging Never Felt Better™



Volunteer Chefs

Cooking for our Community

By **Adam Hayes**, Development & Communications Specialist

Deb had always wanted to be a volunteer chef with Food for People, and after retiring from the Humboldt County Office of Education, it felt like the perfect time. While growing up, both of Deb's Grandmothers instilled a love for cooking into her. She has fond memories of passionate afternoons with Nana baking pies and cookies while wearing aprons a little too big for her. Deb is all grown up, and now **she uses cooking as a way to stay in touch with who she is.** Monday through Friday, Food for People has volunteer chefs cook for our volunteers. It is a core component of how Food for People creates community around food.

When Deb first cooked at Food for People, she was nervous. It was a different kitchen, a different oven, and you don't quite have the same comfort you have while cooking at home. When Deb reflected on her first time cooking with Food for People she said: "It felt like I was on the television show Chopped." Our volunteer chefs can choose from the ingredients we have available, which is always nutritious high-quality food, however, if you come in thinking you're going to make lasagna and a salad, you might leave making minestrone soup and rice. All of the pressure Deb felt quickly went away when she came to realize she was cooking for very grateful people who were excited she was there. Deb got comfortable in our kitchen, became excited at the challenge of having an "ingredients first then recipe" mentality, and after a couple of weeks, she was at home.

Now Deb is an integral part of the **Food for People family.** While cooking Deb says hello to volunteers, chats it up with the staff, and she hums joyful tunes as she floats through the kitchen. Deb says that she has become a better cook since she started cooking with Food for People. From her eggplant lasagna to her legendary cashew cheese, all of Deb's plant-based recipes reflect Food for People's mission of increasing access to nutritious foods. Outside of playing with recipes and getting to work with our amazing staff and volunteers, there is one thing that Deb finds more satisfying than anything, and that is...

"There is nothing better in this world than helping other people."

When talking with volunteers, one thing that always comes up is how much they appreciate the lunches. One of my favorite parts of Food for People is when staff and volunteers break bread together and bond over a good meal. Coming together over food is what makes Food for People feel like a family. If you are interested in joining our family, Food for People is always looking for people who want to become a volunteer chef. Please email Paloma Herrera at pherrera@foodforpeople.org or



Deb cooking lunch at ou

Tribute & Memor

You can honor a friend making a donation to Food for People a notation to your gift. If we'll send a card to let the donation. It is a great way to honor the memory of someone.

In Memory Of:

Alice Hackett
Beverly Allen
Don
Don Wise
Dr. Richard Wolf
Dustin Trabue
Evelyn Biasca Brom
Fred Jewett
Fred Oliveria
Harold & Jean Fisher
HSU Football
James Carlco "Bob Coffey"
Jane Foster
Jason, John, and Wendi



Gleaning 101

Local Food Saved

By **Allison Kenney**,
Local Food Resources Coordinator

Here on the North Coast of California, days are getting longer, the sun is shining more, and the rainfall is finally starting to taper off. Local farmers are beginning to till, amend, and prepare their fields for planting, start seeds in the greenhouse, and plan for the bountiful growing season ahead. As local farm and garden production begins to ramp up, so does Food for People's Gleaning Program.

Every year in the United States, an estimated 52.4 million tons of food goes to the landfill. Another 10.1 million tons of produce remains unharvested, left out in the field. In any farming community, even ours, there is an element of unpredictability that results in excess product. In a country where one in seven Americans is considered food insecure, our Gleaning Program attempts to bridge the gap between hunger and potential excess in our local food system.

Redirecting fresh local produce to

al independence in a broken food system. Providing our program participants with gleaned produce supports the health and wellness of our neighborhoods and communities by increasing access to nutrient-dense, fresh food for those who may not otherwise be able to afford it. Our program also helps to improve understanding and awareness of eating locally and seasonally and ultimately establishes community around food.

We partner with dozens of incredibly generous local farmers, orchards, and ranchers, who donate fresh, local, and usually organic items for our programs. Last fiscal year we collected more than 27,000 pounds of produce from Humboldt County farmers' fields through our gleaning initiative. These donations are obtained in a couple of ways: groups of Food for People employees and volunteers venture out to manually harvest leftover vegetables that would otherwise be tilled in; or unsold produce left over after farmers' markets or CSA pick-ups is collected and transported back to our warehouse for distribution in one or more of our 18 hunger relief programs. Some farmers grow extra with the intention of donating it to Food for People.

ever-growing so and homesteaded port, we gleaned pounds of produce than 100 individuals through our "Plant People" success of Plant People. Some section of their donated to Food families, and ch

Apple, pe specially plentiful in these trees produce can make fruit on your t dance, rather th great example of our Gleaning Program need have access Food for People assistance to do ing volunteers to the donation is unable to do so

For more ing program,

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A BIG Advocacy win

SSI & CalFresh

By **Heidi McHugh**,
 Community Education & Outreach Coordinator

The phone calls to Food for People's CalFresh Outreach team began last September. At first, it was a few each month, by January it was three or four per day. The callers have questions about the upcoming expansion of CalFresh (formerly Food Stamps) benefits to Californians receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI). This change was included in the 2018-2019 state budget and will be implemented on June 1, 2019. The Humboldt County Department of Health & Human Services began accepting applications on May 1, 2019. The callers are all elated, **some in slight disbelief** that they will finally be eligible for the nutrition benefits of CalFresh. For many of them, this extra money for food will be life-changing.

SSI is a program administered by the Social Security Administration that provides a very basic income to older adults and people with disabilities with no or very limited other income or resources. Approximately 8.2 million Americans rely on SSI to pay for their basic needs like food, housing, and medicine. Most SSI recipients either can't work due to a disability, or are seniors receiving very little or no Social Security income due to limited work history in the traditional labor market. Women who never worked outside the home, farm workers, domestic workers, and others who were paid "off the books" are often SSI recipients. More than two-thirds of elderly adults receiving SSI payments are women. There are about 6,000 SSI recipients in Humboldt County; the majority receive the benefit because of a disability.

The maximum federal payment for an individual on SSI is \$771 a month. Some states, like California, kick in a small supplement to make up for the higher cost of living. The maximum federal benefit of \$771 a month is just 74% of today's federal poverty line (FPL). The State Supplemental Payment (SSP) is California's supplemental payment to recipients of SSI. Current levels leave California SSI recipients receiving the maximum combined state and federal benefit living at just 89% of the federal poverty line. A person with earnings at 100% FPL

annually to meet a living on SSI alone far needs. After paying to choose between hygiene items. On households Food for contain an SSI recipient report charitable for their only sources of

Why are some vulnerable Californians on CalFresh? California in 1974 when the federal combined federal-state that time, states with state supplemental administering food stamps. California opted for increased its monthly SSI and SSP grants rising costs of living Living Adjustment the COLA was suspended address the Great SSI/SSP recipients is SSI/SSP are living on the poverty line.

The policy benefits needs of these Californians costs of housing skyrocket. Advocates member of Food for People have been working on this policy. "This major victory for elders and persons on SSI to be eligible for CalFresh is a win for food equity for the most vulnerable needing help in making this change twenty five years. For this problem, and now we need recipients to get help improving their health. Food for People, advocates clients are on SSI. The shop at farmers markets is an economic win. The money will be used for the state advocates





Jan and Lynne, co-coordinators of the Arcata Food Pantry, with Hailey posing happily in their new storage room.

Satellite Story

Our Local Food System

By **Hailey Mohland**, Pantry Network Coordinator

The week of the third Thursday of each month is lovingly referred to as Pantry Week here at Food for People. Over the course of four days, I ride along with our delivery driver, Frank, to deliver pallets of commodities, produce, and other foods to our network of 17 pantries located throughout Humboldt County. These pantries range from large to small, in locations as far as Orick, Hoopa, and Garberville. The entire Pantry Network serves an average of 1,500 households per month, not including the approximately 1,200 households that receive food from our on site Eureka Choice Pantry.

We begin on Monday morning. Our warehouse staff has been busy crating and packing the produce to be delivered for the day, as they will continue to do so with the help of volunteers for the rest of the week. On Tuesday we traverse the winding mountain roads to eastern Humboldt, and then end the day at the Trinity Baptist Church where the Arcata food pantry is located. Wednesday is our busiest day of deliveries, with five stops between Blue Lake and Garberville, equaling 170 miles round trip. Finally, on Thursday we visit the Eel River Valley and then follow the river up to Bridgeville to round out a long but gratifying week.

Church, during a distribution recently. Lynne showed me the new systems they had implemented to make the distributions run more smoothly. Previously, food was stored in a tiny closet that was entirely separate from the people they serve shopped for food. The lack of space, and it was difficult to get commodities out of the room (I can say this from direct experience—it was a challenge!). Over the course of several months of assistance from the church community, Lynne and I moved the entire inventory to a room adjacent to the food, which has changed the way things flow completely. Lynne told me, “It just flows now.” It’s evident that the seniors, children, and families are the same way. I loved shadowing Lynne and seeing her pride for their program, which serves between 150 and 200 households a month.

Each pantry in our network runs into unique issues that face their diverse communities. Our volunteer coordinators dedicated to serving these communities. Although each pantry is very unique and operates completely separate from one another, coordinators from across the county will join in a meeting in June to learn from each other, share ideas, and move toward fighting hunger here in Humboldt County. Our coordinators pour into their individual communities with Food for People’s gratitude for their service.



*"Because of your help, we
have fresh vegetables."*

**Volunteers Teresa and Honey unloading food
for the McKinleyville Senior Distribution.**

Senior Distribution

Food for Seniors

By **Adam Hayes**, Development & Communications Specialist

We rolled the windows down, and a warm breeze filled the van as we approached a building made of chocolate brown wood. "Here we are." Michael, the Senior & Homebound Programs Coordinator said. I stepped down from the van that had been towering over other cars on our way to a McKinleyville Senior Distribution. I had never been to a Food for People Senior Distribution before, but I did know that we distribute more than 8,500 bags and boxes per year, and today we would feed 50 people in McKinleyville.

After trying 10 of his 20 keys, Michael got the door to the pantry open. I opened the blinds to let light in, and the room instantly felt cozy and warm. Carrie, a fellow staff member, began unfolding big wooden tables. Michael and I started bringing in crates of pears, carrots, bread, potatoes, apples, and eggs. Two volunteers named Teresa and Honey arrived. Teresa is a powerful force - you can feel the energy radiating off of her - and Honey is the type of person you instantly feel comfortable around. Teresa and Honey have been volunteering with Food for People for years. I asked Teresa why she started volunteering. Without missing a beat

be endless crates of high-quality food was set on the table, we were ready to

I noticed a line forming outside. We were hugging, smiling, and laughing. I realized that at a food distribution or a gathering, the most important thing I came to realize was, it was both. I went to help Michael distribute food. We distributed canned foods and cheese to people's homes. When we helped, we shared a genuine human connection. The story was different. Some had just lost a loved one, a hard time covering meals. For others, it was just working out how they had planned. One person was grateful. That day we received food from us and the donors who make this work possible.

The afternoon flew by. Thanks to help seniors walk away with a bag of food. I told again and again how the food made me feel more alive. The glow of gratitude was still in the air all day - a feeling I hope I can share with you for our work. Getting to help people create the lives we can live. It was powerful to see the most important, food with each other. We packed, and Michael and I pulled out a box. I looked at him and asked,